

# Prayer

GEEK OUT

**WHAT IS THE SHEMA?**

TIM MACKIE

FEATURE

**TWO SACRED PRAYERS**

JON COLLINS

GALLERY


**BEHIND THE ART: EXPLORING OUR**

**WORD STUDY STYLE GUIDE**

ARTIST FEATURE

**PMURPHY**





Listen, O Israel,  
the LORD is our God,  
the LORD alone,  
and as for you,  
you shall love  
the LORD your God  
with all your heart,  
all your soul,  
and all your strength.

**DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5**

THE SHEMA

# Contents

## GEEK OUT

### What is the Shema?

TIM MACKIE - P10

The Shema refers to a few lines from the book of Deuteronomy that became a daily prayer in the Ancient Israelite tradition. It's the equivalent of the Lord's prayer in the Christian tradition.

## FEATURE

### Two Sacred Prayers

JON COLLINS - P28

We have been handed down two beautiful prayers in Scripture: the Shema given to us by Moses and the Lord's Prayer given to us by Jesus. Both of these ancient prayers contain the themes, thoughts, and requests that can change you into a person whose life becomes an ongoing prayer.

CONTRIBUTORS: JON COLLINS  
TIM MACKIE  
MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: ADREAS KIND  
INSTAGRAM @JXNDREAS  
ANDREW PREBLE  
ANDREWPREBLEDESIGN.COM

DESIGN: MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN  
COPY EDITOR: MAKENZIE HALBERT-HOWEN

The Quarterly is a publication exploring the work of The Bible Project. It's a gift to our supporters and is not intended for sale or distribution. The Bible Project Quarterly is printed in Portland, Oregon.

[thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com)

WELCOME P 2

THE LATEST P 3

STUDIO FEATURE: P 4

### The Bible Project at a Glance

SCRIPTS: P 12

### The Shema: Word by Word

GALLERY: P 20

### Behind the Art: Exploring Our Word Study Style Guide

ARTIST FEATURE: P 34

### Pmurphy

RECOMMENDED READING P 38

SUPPORTER CORNER P 40



## DISCLAIMER:

This PDF is a digital version of our publication. There are click-able hyperlinks for convenience, but we apologize if your reading experience is less than great. We designed this quarterly to be read in print.



# Welcome

This is the inaugural issue of The Bible Project's Quarterly. You are getting this issue because you have been a supporter of The Bible Project at some point in our three years as an organization. We hope you enjoy it!

We are making this Quarterly because we wanted to give you a tangible item that would keep you connected to The Bible Project. Instead of making a newsletter, we decided to create something that felt more like a beautiful magazine. We wanted to make something that you proudly place on your coffee table, a magazine you are excited to thumb through instead of one you skim over and throw away.

Every issue of this new Quarterly will explore a video that we've recently released at The Bible Project in greater depth. Throughout the pages, we'll highlight art from our projects, and we'll also do behind-the-scenes interviews with our team. We expect this publication to grow and change as we learn what our supporters enjoy and want to learn more about.

It has been an incredible honor to lead this organization from a small, hair-brained idea to this moment—a full-fledged animation studio creating world-class media showing how the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. We are now able to put out a new video every two to three weeks. On top of that, we are moving into print. Our coffee table book sold out its first run, and we are beginning a series of workbooks that will correspond with our theme videos.

This project has become one of the largest crowd-funded initiatives on the planet thanks to you, our supporters. We hope that you are proud of what you have contributed to as we pool our resources and talent.

We also hope that you enjoy this issue. It is all about prayer. Specifically, we will focus on the ancient Jewish prayer found in Deuteronomy called the Shema, which is still full of truth and beauty for us today.

WITH LOVE,  
JON & TIM





# The Latest

## Illustrated Summaries of Biblical Books: Second Edition

We're now taking pre-orders online for the second edition of our coffee table book. This book contains the entire collection of every Read Scripture poster alongside short summaries of each book. The diagrams include the Old Testament and New Testament books in the Protestant tradition.

The second edition is the same gray cloth hardcover binding as the first edition, but we've updated the gold details with a sleek black. It is perfect for displaying on a table or to use during family Bible studies or small groups.

Pre-orders will ship in mid November.

[THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/PRODUCTS](http://THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/PRODUCTS)



## Advent: Word Series

Peace. Hope. Joy. Love.

This December we are releasing a four-part series of word studies for the season of Advent. Like all of our videos, these will be free for everyone. If your church wants early access to these videos to incorporate them into your service, please email us.

[SUPPORT@JOINTHEBIBLEPROJECT.COM](mailto:SUPPORT@JOINTHEBIBLEPROJECT.COM)





## STUDIO FEATURE

# The Bible Project at a Glance

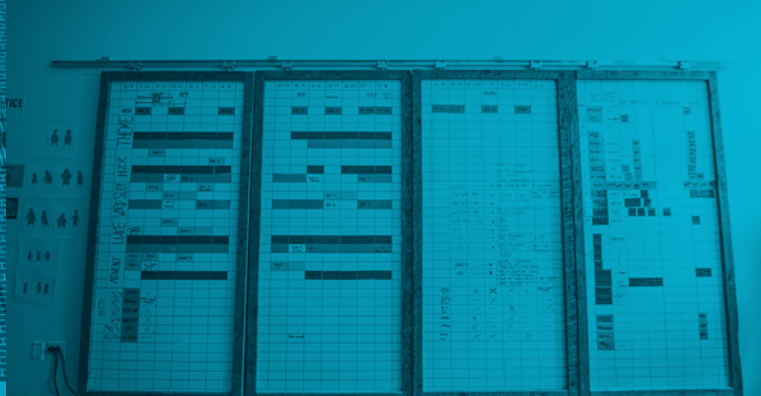
BY MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

**We realize that while you may have seen our videos, you might not know much about our company. In this feature, we take a look at the team of artists, producers, and systems that make The Bible Project happen.**

*Jon and Tim are the founders of The Bible Project (TBP). We checked in to hear a bit about the company and its history. Robert Perez (Bot) has been working with TBP since the beginning. He's currently the Art Director.*

*In the simplest terms possible, what is The Bible Project?*

**Jon:** We are a creative studio with one mission: to create video resources that explore how the Bible is one unified story that leads to Jesus. We're a non-profit studio, and we're able to make all this cool stuff because of thousands of donors (AKA "micro-patrons") who support what we're doing. It is a really cool model, and it's really fun.



***As a creative studio, what does TBP produce?***

Jon: The main thing that we create is short, animated videos. We put them all online on YouTube, so anyone can watch them for free. We have videos on all the books of the Bible. They show the literary design and main themes of each book, as well as how it fits into the entire storyline of the Bible. We also have videos on biblical themes, the large scale motifs that you can trace from the beginning to the end of Scripture. We also do overview videos in different sections of the Bible, such as the wisdom literature and the Torah. And we have more! There's a large library of videos now, over 100 of them, all on YouTube. We put out a new video every two to three weeks.

***How many artists work at TBP, and what do they do?***

Bot: There are ten of us working on videos. We have five illustrators in house, three animators, and two artists who can both illustrate and animate. I'm the Art Director, but I also work on some videos as an illustrator.

***As the Art Director, what do you do day-to-day?***

Bot: So for videos, I oversee the work our illustrators and animators do. I meet with the illustrators before any art is made to make sure we're on the same page. Then if they need any direction when the scene is in process, I can step in and help think through any problems. The same goes for the animators. Our graphic designer also comes to me to get approval on any marketing or print materials we put out.

LEFT: TIM'S HEBREW BIBLE

CENTER TOP: OUTSIDE TBP OFFICES IN PORTLAND

CENTER BOTTOM: TBP OFFICES DURING A QUIET WORK DAY

RIGHT TOP: TBP PRODUCTION CHART

RIGHT BOTTOM: TIM AND JON



*How has the art, or the artistic process, of TBP evolved over the years?*

Bot: When the project started, it was just me choosing the style for our videos. I was the only one creating art too. But now that I have a whole team to collaborate with, a lot has changed. Each of our artists has a unique perspective and a unique style. When we put those all together, the styles are more interesting, our characters are more consistent, and we push each other to refine our craft. The art just comes out better.

*Is the whole team just working on those videos, or are there other projects?*

Jon: We started out with videos, but a lot of other things have spun out of them. One unexpected thing was our podcast. Tim and I would have long conversations about our upcoming videos in order to get ready to write a script. These conversations were really rewarding for me, and we realized other people would enjoy them too, so we started recording them and putting them up on a podcast. The podcast has consistently been in the top ten in the Religion category in iTunes, and we get a lot of positive feedback. Another thing we do is put out study notes that accompany the videos, and we are beginning to write workbooks that will explore the biblical theme videos in a much deeper way.

*What's the backstory to this project? Where did this idea come from?*

Jon: I grew up with the Bible and was told all my life that it was the key to understanding this life and to understanding life after death. In high school I fell in love with the spiritual journey of becoming a complete person, and I wanted to understand what the Bible had to say about that. I went to a small Bible school in Portland called Multnomah to study the Bible for four years, after which much of the Bible remained a mystery to me. I had so many questions I couldn't find great answers to.

Professionally, I made animated videos for companies. I became proficient in using animation to explain things, especially complicated things. I spent years refining that skill. All the while, I dreamt about making the same type of videos that explained theology and used really great art. This was mostly for my own benefit, as I wanted to learn and catalogue what I was learning with short animated videos.

I knew I needed help, and that is where Tim came in. Tim had been studying the Bible for a couple of decades, and he had just moved back to Portland. I really respected his understanding of Scripture and the theological conversations we would have. While our families barbecued in my backyard, we began to discuss making videos that showed the unified story of the Bible, book-by-book and theme-by-theme. We started working on a couple pilot videos a half-day each week for a year before we came up with something that we were really proud of.

Tim: I became a follower of Jesus when I was nineteen at a skateboard outreach ministry. I was captivated by the way of Jesus, and I wanted to be one of his followers. I knew part of that meant reading the Bible, but I found it to be a very strange book. I signed up for classes at Multnomah Bible College (now Multnomah University) to learn how to study the Bible. One professor, Ray Lubeck, taught a class called Bible Study Methods, which was all about learning to read the Bible as ancient literature with an eye for its literary shape and themes. The final project in the class was to draw the literary design of the book of Jonah. After that, I began drawing out designs for all the books of the Bible.

After that I went to school for many more years to learn everything I could about the language, cultural background, and history of the Bible. I loved every minute of it! During my education, I grew in my appreciation for the Bible as a human and divine book that is one unified story that leads to Jesus. I began teaching at a church in Madison, Wisconsin and helped lead the congregation through a year long experience of reading through the Bible with this paradigm in mind.

When Jon pitched the idea of making theology videos, I immediately knew the type of content I would want to make. We began working on the theme video of "Heaven and Earth" and the video that covers "Genesis 1-11." We found that we really enjoyed the process of making the videos and that people found them informative and helpful. So we kept at it, and things began to grow quickly.









*The Bible is an ancient book, and people have been explaining it for a long time. What makes TBP unique?*

Tim: I suppose it would be the unique medium of the short, animated explainer video. Jon has the gift of taking complex ideas and boiling them down to the simple, essential pieces and linking them into a short story. The visual production quality is really high because of the outstanding team of artists that's come around this project. And I think I was privileged to be exposed to some truly great teachers who helped me grasp the Scriptures in a way that isn't that common anymore. A big part of my education was immersing myself in the history of Jewish scholarship on the Bible. It's probably a combination of things that makes the videos what they are. I'm so glad they're stimulating and helpful to people.

*When TBP began, what was your main goal?*

Jon: The goal was to make videos that we wish had existed when we were learning the Bible. There were about 100 videos on a list that Tim created. The audacious goal was to make all these videos and make them really high quality and free to watch. In order to do that, we created a crowd-funding model. We released two videos and asked the people who watched them to pitch in a few bucks, so we could make another one. I expected that we would raise enough money to slowly make a video every three to four months and have a really cool side

gig going. We didn't expect things to grow as fast and big as they have.

Tim: Jon really had a more clear vision of what it would take to build a studio capable of producing the videos. I was more focused on how to frame all this content I had learned over the years and communicate within the medium of the short, explainer video. In essence, I have found the Scriptures to be a bottomless source of wisdom, beauty, inspiration, and challenge for years now, and I wanted to invite other people to see that. Many people in our culture view the Bible as an ancient, irrelevant, even oppressive book, but the problem lies mainly with us. We've simply lost the ability to read a piece of literature as sophisticated and profound as the Bible, not to mention one that comes from an ancient culture and was written in other languages. It's such a privilege to be able to represent these incredible texts and Jesus himself to such a wide audience.

*Has anything changed as the company has grown?*

Jon: The goal hasn't changed; it has just been super-charged. Tim and I both came on full-time to this project, and we have built a studio that can create a lot of really high quality videos. We still have about three years worth of video content that we want to produce. On top of that, we are making workbooks and beginning to research other types of projects that can support the mission of The Bible Project.

TOP: ART DIRECTOR ROBERT PEREZ

MIDDLE: TBP ARTISTS WORKING IN OUR PORTLAND OFFICE

BOTTOM: STORYBOARD FOR THE LEVITICUS VIDEO



GEEK OUT

# What is the Shema?

BY TIM MACKIE

**The Shema refers to a few lines from the book of Deuteronomy that became a daily prayer in the Ancient Israelite tradition. It's the equivalent of the Lord's prayer in the Christian tradition.**

The Shema gets its name from the first Hebrew word of the prayer “Listen, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” The English word “listen” renders the Hebrew word “shema.” In traditional Jewish prayer practice, these lines from Deuteronomy were combined with other passages from the Torah and were prayed in the morning and evening. This prayer has been one of the most influential traditions in Jewish history, and it functioned both as the Jewish pledge of allegiance and a hymn of praise.

The Shema appears in the opening section of Deuteronomy, which is a collection of speeches attributed to Moses before the next generation of Israel entered the Promised Land. Moses challenges them with his wisdom and warning because he doesn't want these Israelites to repeat their parents' mistakes. Rather, he invites them to respond to God's grace and mercy with love, faithfulness, and obedience. The book is designed to have three large sections, as you can see in our video on Deuteronomy. Here, we will focus on a small section of Deuteronomy chapter six (“the Shema”). The Shema is the centerpiece for the first opening section of Moses' speech to the people.

Listen, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone, and as for you, you shall love the LORD your God with all your hearth, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5

## Translating the Shema

Bible geeks, you will find this part really interesting, but be warned—it's kind of complicated! Since ancient times, there has been much debate on how exactly to translate and interpret the Shema because of ambiguity in the grammar of the main sentences. In ancient Hebrew, there is no present-tense verb equivalent to the English verb “is.” There is a word for “was” (hayah) and “will be” (yihyeh), but “is” doesn't exist; rather, two words are put next to each other, and the word “is” is inferred.

English: “The car is red.”

Ancient Hebrew: “The car red.”

Ancient Israelites obviously had a concept of the verb “is,” but they just didn't use a word to express it in their language. Rather, they used this grammar tool of simply placing two words together (Hebrew grammar nerds call these nominal clauses).

The problem in translating and interpreting the Shema arises from the fact that it's made of two back-to-back sentences that lack the word “is.” In Hebrew, the prayer consists of four nouns in a row.

Hebrew: YHWH 'elohenu

YHWH ekhad

English: Lord our God Lord one

As you can see, we've got four words, and depending on where you place the word “is,” you can end up with different sentences.

The Lord our God is one Lord.

The Lord is our God,

the Lord is one.

The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

At the end of the day, the meaning between these options isn't drastically different, but each one has a different emphasis. Is the point that the Lord God is one and not many (#1 or #3), or is the emphasis on the fact that only the Lord is our God (#2)? Does the Shema claim that Israel's God is one being, or is it highlighting that the Lord alone is Israel's God and not any other?

As you'll see in a moment, this last meaning seems to fit the overall context of Deuteronomy much better. In other words, the Shema isn't trying to make a philosophical statement about God's essence or being (that God is “one”). Rather, the Shema is a pledge of allegiance to the Lord God of Israel that excludes allegiance to any other gods.

## Polytheistic Threat

As you read further in Deuteronomy, this will make perfect sense. The Israelites have been steeped in polytheistic cultures for generations. From their roots in Canaan, to the long years in Egypt, to their traveling through Canaanite territory in the wilderness, they have been surrounded by people worshiping many different gods. Moses clearly believes that loyalty, obedience, and love to their one true God is the only

way to life. One of the greatest threats to Israel's future was dividing their allegiance between many gods. The Shema is a daily reminder that "The Lord our God alone is our God." The prayer goes on from there to show the value of passing this conviction on to later generations to spare them the tragic results of idolatry to other gods.

**You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.**

**DEUTERONOMY 6:7**

## Meaning of the Shema

The opening line "Listen, O Israel" does not simply mean to let the sound waves enter your ears. Rather, the word "listen" here means to allow the words to sink in, provide understanding, and generate a response. In other words, in Hebrew, "hearing" and "doing" are basically the same thing, but what is Israel to do in response to hearing that the Lord alone is their God? "Love the Lord your God." In context, love isn't simply the warm, fuzzy, emotional energy we feel when we like someone. In the Bible, love is action. You love someone when you act in loyalty and faithfulness, so for Israel, to love means faithful obedience to the terms of their covenant relationship. Those terms are the laws and commands that make up the body of the book (Deuteronomy 12-26). Obedience to these laws was never about legalism or trying to earn God's favor. In the Old Testament, obedience is about love and listening. If an Israelite loves God, that will make it easier to listen and absorb his teachings and guidance. This is why the words "listen" and "love" are so tightly connected and repeated throughout these opening speeches of Deuteronomy.

## Shema Usage in the New Testament

As we mentioned above, the Shema became a twice-daily prayer within Judaism. It was so widely practiced in the second temple period that Jesus himself grew up praying it. This prayer was formative for Jesus, and he drew upon it in his teachings. He was once asked which command in the Torah was the greatest:

**Jesus answered, "The first of all the commandments is, 'Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

**MARK 12:29-31**

In the book of Revelation, John the visionary drew upon this prayer to describe Jesus' followers. Part of the Shema prayer in Deuteronomy 6:8 contains these words: "You shall bind these words as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as symbols between your eyes." The physical location "on your hands" and "between your eyes" is a symbol with fairly obvious meaning. Your eyes are what you use to see, and your hands are what you use for almost everything else you do. This prayer was to guide the vision and action of every moment of life. This is why John the visionary says that in the new creation, when God's people live in intimate proximity

to God and the risen Jesus, "They will see God's face, and his name will be on their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4).

This is in contrast to people who reject the way of Jesus. They have given their allegiance to other powers that are bent on destroying them (depicted as "beasts" in Revelation 13). John the visionary also drew upon the Shema to depict a human life on the path of destruction:

**The Beast also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads.**

**REVELATION 13:16**

For John, the choice is a stark one. You either give your allegiance to Jesus and allow him to influence how you see and act, or your allegiance will belong to destructive powers that will also govern how you see and what you do in life. One path leads to life, the other to death. All of these ideas and images come from Moses' words in Deuteronomy, specifically from the Shema.

## The Shema for Christians

The Shema is a beautiful prayer. There's a reason why God's people have been praying these words for millennia. They are simple words with the capacity to reshape the course of an entire life. The Shema can keep God's love and loyalty in the forefront of your mind and drive you towards obedience, not out of obligation or duty, but out of love. The words of Jesus in the Gospel of John are obviously derived from the Shema:

**The one who has my commands and keeps them, that's the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and I will reveal myself to him.**

**JOHN 14:21**

And remember whose love started this whole chain reaction of love leading to obedience.

**We love because he first loved us.**

**1 JOHN 4:19**

At the end of the day, following Jesus is about love—love that came to us when we weren't looking for it. As we receive this love, it generates gratefulness, humility, and a commitment to honor and love in return. Love gives way to more love, which, in turn, results in faithfulness and obedience. These are truths that can transform us from the inside out. Can you imagine a better way to never forget this truth than by memorizing and praying the Shema twice a day? Maybe you should start today.

WORDS BY TIM MACKIE

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED 02/18/17

ON [THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/BLOG](http://THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/BLOG)



# The Shema: Word by Word

The Bible is full of vocabulary that can be confusing. Words in the Bible can feel isolated from the words we use in everyday language.

At the same time, biblical language can begin to feel more familiar as we read it in verses, sing it in songs, and use it in prayers. The repetition of the words makes them feel common, even though they often remain full of mystery.

Because of this, we decided to do an ongoing series of animated videos that walk through biblical words. It will be an animated biblical

dictionary of sorts. We have written out over fifty words we would like to do, and we are sure that the list will grow. We decided to start this word study with a prayer.

In Deuteronomy, there is a short, memorable prayer recited daily by the Jewish people. In this prayer, there are six fascinating biblical words that we turned into six animated videos: listen, LORD, love, heart, soul, and strength. You can watch these videos on our [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#). On the following pages, we've included the first four scripts and their corresponding, culminating art.

## Shema: "Hear/Listen"

For thousands of years, every morning and evening, Jewish people have prayed these well-known words as a way of expressing their devotion to God. They're called the Shema.

Listen, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone, and as for you, you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

**DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5**

Now the first word of the Shema is "hear" or "listen" which, in Hebrew, is pronounced "shema." That's where the prayer gets its name.

Now shema is a really common word in the Hebrew Bible, and it's obvious why. Hearing is a very universal activity. It's usually connected with the ear, as in Proverbs chapter 20:

Ears that shema' and eyes that see,  
the Lord has made them both.

**PROVERBS 20:12**

Now that seems basic enough, but if you look at the other ways that Hebrew authors can use the word shema, they use it to mean more than just "let sound waves enter your ear."

In Hebrew, shema can also mean "pay attention to" or "focus on." So when Leah, who wasn't loved by her husband Jacob, she has a son, and she names him "Simon," or in Hebrew, "Shim'on" because she says, "The Lord has shema that I am unloved."

Shema means to hear and to pay attention to, and even more, it can also mean "responding to what you hear." This is why so many of the cries for help in the book of Psalms begin with a call that God "listen."

RESPOND

"Shema my voice, when I  
call O Lord, be merciful  
and answer me."

Psalms 27:7

ATTENTION

FOCUS

OBEY

The Lord  
has shema  
that I am  
unloved

SIMON  
SHIMON  
SHEMA

"Ears that shema and eyes that see,  
the Lord has made them both."

Proverbs 1:1-2

I will listen  
and do what  
you say

listen closely

# שמע SHEMA HEAR or LISTEN

NOW IF YOU  
SHEMA  
ME FULLY  
& KEEP MY  
COVENANT

THEN OUT OF  
ALL NATIONS  
YOU WILL BE MY  
TREASURED  
POSSESSION

EXODUS 19:4

They have  
ears but  
they're not  
listening

COVENANT



shema my voice, when I call O Lord, be merciful and answer me.” So asking God to Shema, is at the same time asking God to act, to do something.

PSALM 27:7

So asking God to shema is at the same time asking God to act, to do something.

It’s similar to when God asks people to listen like when the people of Israel come to Mount Sinai. God says, “If you shema me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations, you will be my treasured possession.”

Now there’s a couple of interesting things about this verse in Exodus. In Hebrew, the word shema is repeated twice in this sentence to give it emphasis—if you “shema shema,” meaning “listen closely.”

But also notice that from God’s point of view, listening is basically the same as keeping the covenant. So when God asked the people to shema, what he means is that they listen and obey.

And that’s the last fascinating thing about shema. In ancient Hebrew, there is no separate word for “obey,” meaning “to carry out the wishes of someone who knows better than you or is in authority over you.”

In the Bible, if you want to say, “I will listen and do what you say,” you use the single word “shema.”

In Hebrew, listening and doing are two sides of the same coin. This is why later in Israel’s history, when the people were breaking their covenant promises to God, the Hebrew prophets would say things like, “they have ears, but they’re not listening.”

Israelites, of course, could hear just fine, but they weren’t actually listening, or else they would act differently. And so in the end, listening in the Bible is about giving respect to the one speaking to you and doing what they say. Real listening takes effort and action.

And that’s the Hebrew word, “shema.”

## YHWH: “The LORD”

We’re going to look at the second key word here, “LORD,” written in all capital letters. This is the personal name of Israel’s God.

We first learn the meaning of this name in the story of Moses and the burning bush in the book of Exodus, chapter three. God appears to Moses, and he commissions him to liberate the Israelites from slavery. So Moses wonders, what if people ask the name of the god who’s sent me? And so God responds, “Tell them ehyeh has sent me to you.” Now, that Hebrew word ehyeh means “I will be.” In other words, God’s name means that he is “the one who is and who will be.” God’s existence doesn’t depend on anyone or anything else. This God simply is.

But it will sound kind of strange for Moses to go say to the Israelites, “I will be has sent me to you.” Only God can say, “I will be.” So in the next sentence, God tells Moses the version he should say aloud. “Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, he has sent me to you.” Now that word yahweh is the ancient Hebrew form of the verb “he will be.” And this is the personal name of the God of Israel; it appears over 6,500 times in the Old Testament.

Now here’s what’s interesting. Over the centuries, Israelites wanted to honor the sacred nature of this divine name. So as they read the Hebrew Bible aloud and they came to this name, they stopped saying Yahweh and instead started saying the Hebrew word for lord, which is adonai.

Now this practice has been continued throughout the centuries, and so later when people started translating the Bible into English, they adopted this same practice. Instead of spelling out the divine name, they translated it as “LORD” spelled in all capital letters.

Okay, you got that? Good because there’s more. Ancient Jewish scribes wanted to prevent anyone from even accidentally saying this name aloud when you read the Hebrew Bible, so they came up with a visual device to remind you to make sure you say adonai. They took the four consonant letters of the divine name (yod-heh-vav-heh), these letters correspond to our English letters YHWH. Then they inserted the three vowels from the word adonai and combined these together to create an artificial hybrid word, which if you





pronounced it would say, yahowah. But no Israelite ever said “yahowah”; it’s simply a visual reminder to say the word adonai.

Now it gets more interesting. Much later, Christian scribes came along who didn’t know that yahowah was an artificial word, and so they began to say it aloud and spell it in their writings. This is the word that eventually entered into English as “Jehovah.” It’s a word many people still use today.

But the main thing is the word “LORD” in all capital letters is an indication of the divine name. Don’t confuse it with the word “Lord”

in your English translations that’s not in all capital letters. That is the actual Hebrew word adon, which just means lord or master. This word can refer to people like kings, or the master of a servant, or even a shepherd over his sheep. And sometimes, biblical authors will use this word to refer to God, like in the phrases, “the Lord of all the earth,” or the “Lord of Lords.”

But behind all of these words, “Jehovah,” “LORD,” “adonai,” stands the original divine name of the God of Israel. It refers to the one who was, who is, and who forever will be.

## Ahavah: “Love”

We’re going to look at the third key word in this prayer, how Israel is called to love their God, but what does that mean? Love is a very common word in most languages, as it is in ancient Hebrew. It’s pronounced a-ha-vah. It most basically refers to the kind of affection or care that one person shows another. It sometimes describes physical affection, like the King of Persia’s love for Queen Esther, but there are other Hebrew words that more specifically refer to physical desire or sex. Ahavah is more broad.

So Abraham had ahavah for his son Isaac. That’s parental love. Jonathan showed ahavah for his friend David. That would be brotherly love. In fact, a whole group of people can have ahavah for their leader like when the Israelites showed love for their King David. Ahavah can even describe loyalty between political allies like Hiram, the King of Tyre, loved David. They had good relations, and so Hiram wanted to help David’s son Solomon build the temple. These are all different kinds of affection described with one word, ahavah.

Now all of this is helpful for understanding God’s ahavah in the Old Testament. So In Deuteronomy, Moses told the Israelites, “God showed affection for you. He chose you because of his ahavah for you.”

So God doesn’t love because the Israelites earned it or deserve it. It simply originates from God’s own character; he loves because he loves. This is why Jeremiah can say that God’s love is everlasting. It has no end because it has no beginning. God’s love just is an eternal fact of the universe. God’s love is not a

duty; it’s a genuine feeling and affection that God experiences.

This is why the prophet Hosea compares God’s love for his people to a husband’s ahavah for his wife or to a parent showing ahavah for their child. It’s one of the strongest things that God feels, but that doesn’t mean that God’s love is just a feeling.

God’s love is also an action. It’s something God chooses to do like when Moses says, “because of God’s ahavah for your ancestors, he brought you out of Egypt with great power.” God’s love isn’t just a sentiment; it is something God does.

And so in the Shema, Israel is called to respond to God’s ahavah by showing ahavah in return. And just like God’s love, human love is to show itself through actions like in Deuteronomy 10:12-13:

**What does the LORD your God ask of you, except to fear the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, to love him and serve him... and to keep his commands.**

All of these actions are centered around love. If I’m not doing them, I don’t actually love God. I just say I do, which leads to one last thing.

In the Old Testament, I show my love for God by how I treat the people around me. In Deuteronomy, we read that God defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and he shows ahavah for the immigrants among you—giving them food and clothing—and so you also show ahavah for the immigrant.



What does the Lord your God ask of you, except to FEAR the Lord your God, to WALK in his ways, to love and SERVE him ...and to KEEP

Deuteronomy 10:12-15

LOVE  
YOUR NEIGHBOR  
AS YOURSELF

Leviticus 19:18

FEELING  
+  
ACTION

We love because  
God first  
LOVED  
US.

1 John 4:19

# אהבה AHAVAH LOVE

"God showed affection for you and chose you ...because of his ahavah for you."  
Deuteronomy 7:7-8

I will help build your temple.



The people are to imitate God's ahavah by showing ahavah for others. This is the idea underneath the famous line, "you shall ahavah your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18).

And so, at the end of the day, all of this is root-

ed in God's own eternal ahavah like we read in the New Testament letter of 1 John 4:19:

**We love because God first loved us.**

And that's the Hebrew word ahavah.

## Lev: "Heart"

We're going to look at the fourth keyword in this prayer: "heart," which in Hebrew is sometimes pronounced "levav" or more often in a short form "lev." Now different cultures throughout history have had different conceptions of how the human body works, and this is also true of the ancient Israelite writers of the Bible.

They knew the heart was an organ in the chest that sustains life; there's even a heart attack mentioned in the Bible, like Nabal "whose heart died inside him, and he became like a stone."

But the biblical authors talk about the heart in many other ways that may seem strange to modern readers. That's because the Israelites had no concept of the brain or any word for it. So they imagined that all of a human's intellectual activity takes place in the heart. For example, you know with your heart; your heart is where you understand and make connections. In the book of Proverbs, wisdom dwells in the heart and your heart is what you use to discern between truth and error.

So the heart is where you think and make sense of the world, but it does more. In the Bible, the heart is also where you feel emotions. You feel pain in your heart, like Hannah did when she couldn't have children. In fact, the phrase "a broken heart" comes from biblical Hebrew. You also experience fear in your heart; it can actually melt or be distressed. Your heart can even be depressed.

But on the flip-side, your heart is where you experience joy. In Hebrew, to be happy is to be "good of heart" or to have a "heart of joy."

So the heart is the generator of physical life and also your intellectual and emotional life, but there's more. In biblical Hebrew, the heart is where you make choices motivated by your

desires. David "had it in his heart to build a temple for God." Your heart is where your affections are centered; they're called "the desires of your heart," and if you really want something, you'll go after it. As Nathan says to David, "whatever is in your heart, go and do it."

So then, in the Bible, the heart is the center of all parts of human existence. As in the Proverb, "guard your heart, because from it flows your whole life."

The prophet Jeremiah believed that the human heart was fundamentally broken; "the heart of a human is deceitful above all, irreversibly sick, who can understand it." He watched a whole generation turn away from God and start sacrificing their children as if it were a good thing.

This is why in the imagination of the Hebrew prophets, the only hope for humanity is the total renewal of the human heart. Moses predicted that if Israel was ever going to really love their God, their lev would need to be "circumcised," a surprising metaphor of removing the evil and stubbornness from the human heart. David, after murder and adultery, pleads with God to "create in me a pure heart." Ezekiel hoped for a day when God would "remove the heart of stone" and give his people a "new heart of soft flesh." This is similar to Jeremiah's hope that God would write the commands of the Torah on the lev of his people.

Which brings us all the way back to the Shema. Every day God's people are called to devote to God their body and mind, their feelings and desires, their future and their failures. This is what it means to love the LORD your God with all your heart.

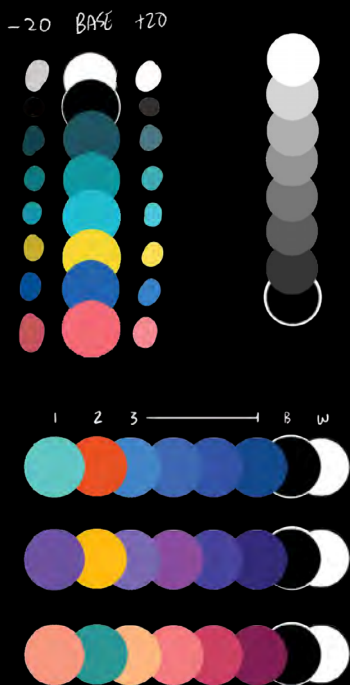


# Behind the Art: Exploring Our Word Study Style Guide

BY MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

**It was a challenge to make the Word Study videos both uniform and unique. The art in this series follows rules for each element. We explore a few of those elements here.**

Before we started the Shema series—the first of many Word Study series—Art Director Robert Perez and the lead artist PMurphy created a style guide. Taking four basic elements of our illustrations—color, typography, texture, and character—they created a document that now guides all artists working on a Word Study video. The goal was to allow each artist freedom within these constraints to communicate the unique word or concept of each video. Below is an overview of our Word Study style guide.



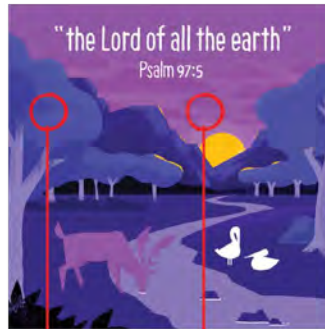
## 1. Color

At first we thought that one set of colors could work for the whole series, but then we realized that would quickly become boring. So each video has a distinct palette, which is created with a specific method (see color rules on opposite page). When the color choices are limited, our artists are forced to plan out a scene's color hierarchy creatively and think hard about what deserves to be highlighted and what can melt into the background.





Interior backgrounds simplified with one color



The colors selected should say something about or reflect the subject matter (Lord > royalty > purples)



Started with base color from palette then added some variation with the + or - 20 brightness range rule

#### COLOR RULES

- Pick a color.
- Pick a complimentary to that color.
- Pick four analogous colors to the first color. These colors should have an easily distinguishable dark to light shading.
- Always have black and white.
- When illustrating scenes, you can take any of these colors and + or - brightness to add variation where it's needed. Stay within the -20 to +20 brightness range.

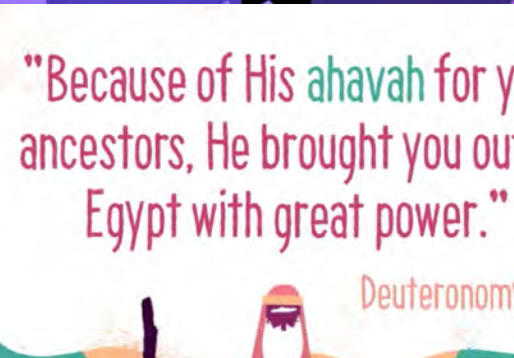
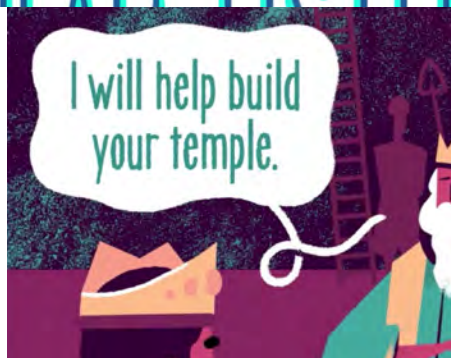
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Is there enough contrast between each color? There should be a balance between tint, tone, and shade.
- Is there a color within the palette that would be a good skin tone for characters? Remember, it doesn't have to be realistic.
- Is there a uniform saturation/vibrance?
- Think about the grayscale palette here when choosing colors. Having light to dark colors should help create a dynamic palette.

# SHEMA

## HEAD LISTER

22 — GALLERY



THE BIBLE PROJECT | QUARTERLY

## 2. Typography

The videos in our Word Study series naturally tend to have more words in them than our other videos. In anticipation of this, we made different typefaces from scratch and then turned them into font files for easy reuse in each video. We've limited each typeface to only a few uses based on its style and legibility (see below).

### WS TITLE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Used only for main Word Study word. Only caps.

### WS RESPOND

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Maybe use this to highlight one-off words. Limit its use. Only Caps.

### WS TALL

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Preferred typeface for any other quote from the Bible or character speech bubbles. Caps and lowercase.

### WS QUOTE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Too much WS Tall? Use this one to switch things up. Caps and lowercase.

### WS CAMPER

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Is it a passage? Use this.



### 3. Textures

We create most of our art in Photoshop with brushes, so we have an almost unlimited amount of options for texture. We narrowed down our brush set to six basic styles that we then grouped into a few different uses (see right).



#### SMOOTH ROUND

Base shapes, characters, etc.



#### PENCIL CSX

Any line art



#### NUPASTEL

Primary character and environment texture

Use with a light touch



#### PASTELPALOOZA

Secondary character and environment texture



#### BRAYER BOSS 2

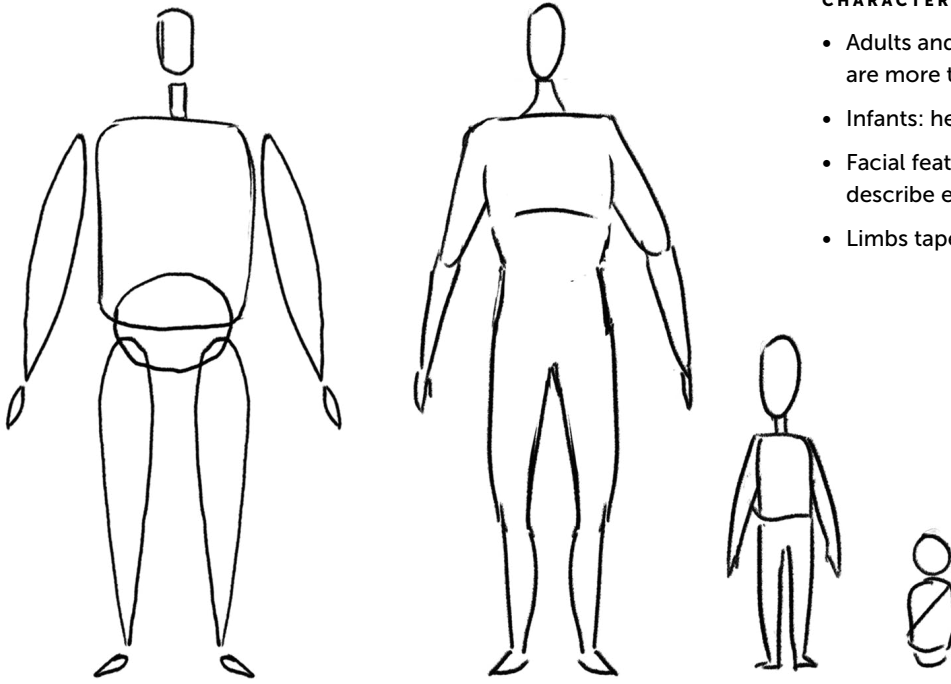
Background texture



#### PAINT SPLATTER

Background texture and maybe for characters



**CHARACTER NOTES**

- Adults and Children: heads are more tall than wide.
- Infants: heads are round.
- Facial features and color describe ethnicity.
- Limbs taper in size.

**PAST****PRESENT****FUTURE**



#### PAST CHARACTERS

- Minimal facial features
- Mostly angular clothing and bodies
- Clothing from period

#### PRESENT CHARACTERS

- More facial features
- Combination of rounder and angular body features
- Simple clothing, unless specified

#### FUTURE CHARACTERS

- Same as Present but with different clothing, gadgets, funky hair

## 4. Characters

In order to focus on the concepts, we simplified the people in this series. They're less realistic and more graphic, almost like a word that can be read all at once. We also wanted to differentiate people from various eras with distinct styles (see left).

The aim of our work is always to communicate clearly and beautifully the truth of the Bible, and we hope this peek behind the scenes has given you a greater appreciation for the work our artists do.

WORDS BY MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN  
DIRECTION FROM ROBERT PEREZ &  
PMURPHY

NEXT PAGE:

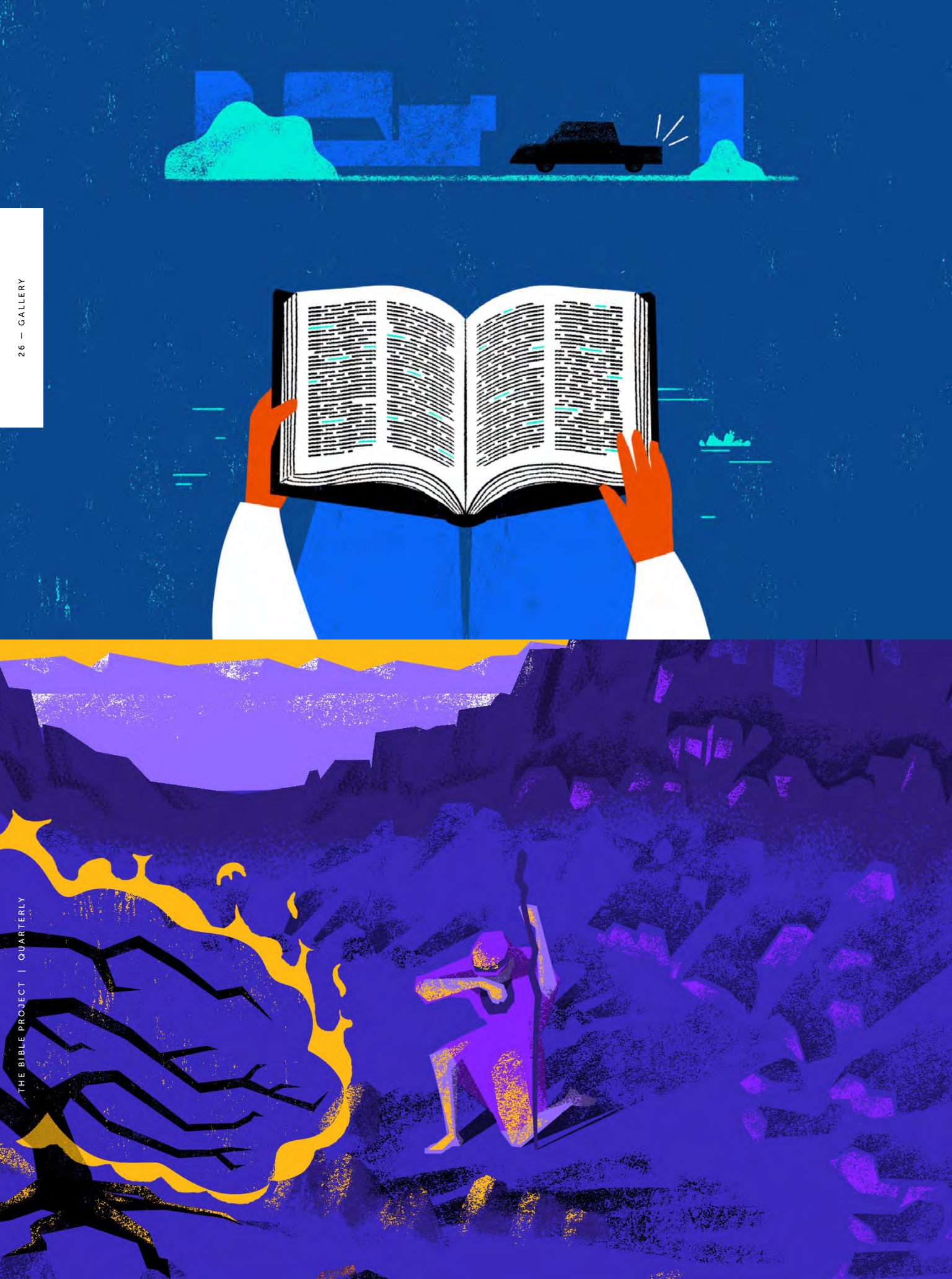
TOP LEFT: SCENE 2 FROM SHEMA: "HEAR/LISTEN"

BOTTOM LEFT: SCENE 6 FROM YHWH: "THE LORD"

TOP RIGHT: SCENE 1 FROM AHAVAH: "LOVE"

BOTTOM RIGHT: SCENE 18 FROM LEV: "HEART"









Create in  
me a pure  
heart.

Psalms 51:10



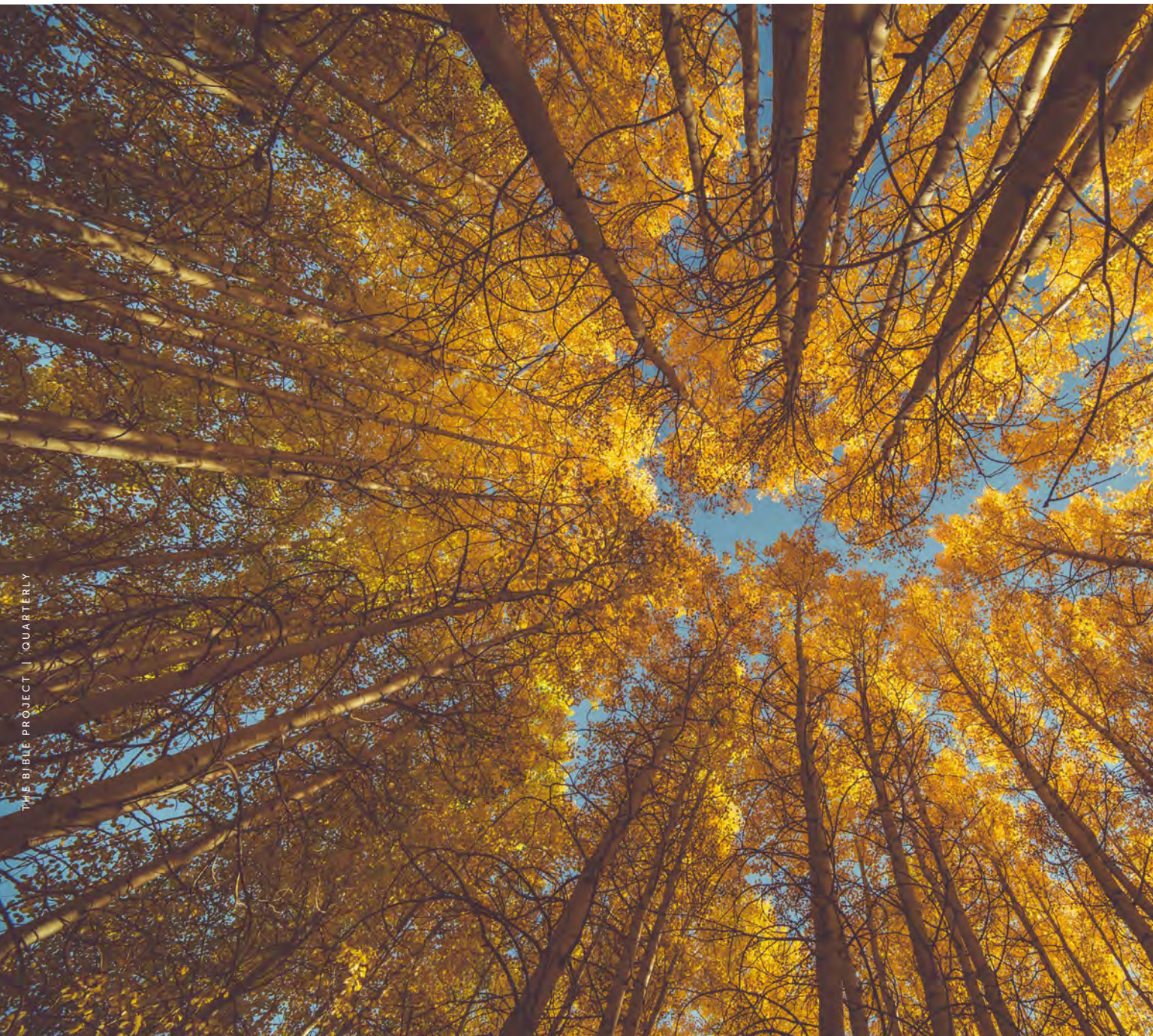


FEATURE

# Two Sacred Prayers

BY JON COLLINS

28 — FEATURE



THE BIBLE PROJECT | QUARTERLY





We have been handed down two beautiful prayers in Scripture: the Shema given to us by Moses and the Lord's Prayer given to us by Jesus. Both of these ancient prayers contain the themes, thoughts, and requests that can change you into a person whose life becomes an ongoing prayer.

Prayer is one of the ways we live in alignment with God. When we pray, we are training our minds and intentions on something beyond ourselves, connecting to the source of all life.

Sounds amazing! The truth is I'm not great at prayer. I do it inconsistently, awkwardly, and often stubbornly. Is there a right way to pray? Is there a right amount to pray? Fortunately, we have a rich tradition to draw upon.

The early followers of Jesus practiced prayer both as a formal and informal experience. They inherited the Jewish tradition of reciting memorized prayers at fixed times of the day, and they also practiced prayer as a spontaneous and ongoing activity. The Apostle Paul instructed early Jesus-followers to “pray in the Spirit in all occasions with all kind of prayers and requests” and to “pray continually.” Right now, no matter where you are, no matter what time it is, no matter what has just happened or is about to happen, you can mark this moment as holy and full of God’s presence. Every moment is an opportunity to allow God to “transform your mind,” to borrow a phrase from the Apostle Paul again.

Prayer in this manner sounds more akin to the natural act of breathing. There are times when you have to focus on it, making sure you’re breathing in healthy rhythms. But there are also times where you don’t have to think about it; you just do it. This balance of prayer habits doesn’t just happen. It takes practice and diligence. This is why we should treasure the two beautiful prayers that we have been given in the Bible: the Shema

given to us by Moses and the Lord’s Prayer given to us by Jesus. Both of these ancient prayers contain the themes, thoughts, and requests that can change us into people whose lives become an ongoing prayer.

## The Shema

Moses led the ancient Israelites from Egypt, through the wilderness, and up to the Jordan River. Across the river was the Promised Land, the land in which they would become a great nation. It was near this place that Moses gave his long, final speech to the people he had been leading. His speech was meant to remind them of who they were and who they needed to become as they entered this land. This speech is what makes up the entire book of Deuteronomy.

Early in the speech, Moses tells his fellow Israelites that the relationship they have with God needs to be passed down generation after generation. We all know it is hard to pass on important wisdom to others, and it is easy for new generations to quickly forget the wisdom of their elders. Because of this, Moses gave them this terse and memorable verse that summarizes the most important part of being an Israelite. This verse has become a sacred prayer known as the Shema:

**Listen, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone, and as for you, you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

**DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5**

This prayer is beautifully compact. All of the laws that Moses mediated to the people can be summarized in the command to love God. Love God with all your heart: this is the center of your identity. In Hebrew, the heart is where your thoughts and desires originate. Love God with all your soul: this is about devoting your entire being, your



life, and your body to God. In Hebrew, the word “soul” (pronounced *nephesh*) refers to a person’s physical body as well as the life experienced through the body. And finally, love God with all your strength: this isn’t referring primarily to physical strength. This is about your capabilities and opportunities, your sphere of influence, your ability to create change in the world. Love with your heart, with your soul, and with your strength.

In order to truly love God, the first thing we have to be able to do is listen. Listening means paying attention to what God has said and is doing in the world and in our own lives and aligning ourselves with those things. Listen and love—the full and divine life can be boiled down to these two wonderful words, an entry into a way of a life full of the Spirit.

Jewish people still pray the Shema every morning and evening. It is a prayer that Jesus himself prayed and advocated, and followers of Jesus now share in the great legacy of Israel. As the apostle says, non-Jews have been “grafted into Israel.”

During the time of Jesus, most religious people in Israel showed their obedience to God by praying the Shema three times a day. In Jewish tradition, the three different times were associated with the three patriarchs. Abraham initiated the morning prayer, Isaac the afternoon prayer, and Jacob the evening prayer. They believed that King David prayed three times a day when he wrote in Psalm 55:18, “Evening, morning, and noontime, I speak and moan, and He heartened to my voice.” And they knew that the prophet Daniel prayed three times a day as recorded in Daniel 6:11.

The prayer that they prayed was always the same. It began with the line of Moses to listen and love and then continued with another line of Moses found in Deuteronomy 11:13-21, followed by more of Moses’ teachings in Numbers 15:37–41. Altogether,

this three-part prayer was called the Shema.

Jesus undoubtedly practiced and was taught the custom of praying the Shema three times a day. He even referred to it.

**One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”**

**MARK 12:28-31**

In Jesus’ mind, knowing and weaving this prayer into daily life was one of the most important habits of a devoted disciple.

## The Lord’s Prayer

Jesus, being the great teacher that he was, left us with another sacred prayer. This prayer has come to be known as The Lord’s Prayer. The long version of the prayer appears in the Gospel of Matthew (6:9-13), and a shorter version in the Gospel of Luke (11:2-4). Below is a translation in modern English of Matthew’s longer version. (It doesn’t contain the final benediction of the prayer, which isn’t found in the earliest biblical manuscripts).

**Heavenly Father,  
May your name be kept holy  
May your Kingdom come  
May your will done on earth  
just as it is done in Heaven  
Give us today true bread  
And forgive us our wrongs  
as we forgive those who wrong us  
Don’t lead us into temptation  
but deliver us from evil**



This prayer, like the Shema, is an invitation into a life of prayer. The words are a gateway to the core themes of a Jesus-centered view of the world: the arrival of God's kingdom, provision, forgiveness, and deliverance.

#### **Heavenly Father...**

The prayer begins with calling God a Father. This is an intimate way to refer to God. He is like an earthly Father in the care and closeness he has to us, but he has none of the limitations of a human father. He is our Heavenly Father.

#### **May your name be kept holy...**

The second line of the prayer is a request that God's name be recognized for what it truly is: unique, one-of-a-kind, and transcendent. God's name is not currently recognized as holy by all people, but imagine if it was. What would the world look like if all humans knew and were known by the name of their Creator? This line invites us to ask that all people come to know God for who he really is.

#### **May your Kingdom come...**

The next part of the prayer expresses the common Jewish expectation that one day God's reign over the world will invade all human kingdoms to set right all wrongs. The request that God's kingdom arrive now is a political request that God would come

and rule our world the way he reigns over the entire universe. To ask that God's will be done "here on earth, as in heaven" assumes that there are places where God's will and reign are not yet acknowledged. There are places where the selfish and short-sighted will of humans is done. To follow Jesus is

to look hopefully for a day when God's gracious and generous will becomes the law of the land.

The Kingdom of God was of utmost importance to Jesus. He told people to seek God's Kingdom before seeking anything else. He taught that God's reign was arriving with him. It may look small and unimpressive, but it would one day grow to become magnificent and life-giving.

#### **Give us today true bread...**

The next line of the Lord's Prayer, "give us today our true bread," is very difficult to translate. Most modern English translations have the phrase "our daily bread." The Greek word in question is "epiousios." This word is only found in this verse in all of ancient Greek literature, which means there was only this context to decipher what it might mean. One legitimate translation is "daily" (literally, "bread of the coming day"). Jesus is almost certainly alluding to the story of Israel's daily collection of manna in the wilderness, and so the idea of "daily bread"

**Prayer in this manner  
sounds more akin  
to the natural  
act of breathing.  
There are times  
when you have  
to focus on it,  
making sure you're  
breathing in  
healthy rhythms.**

makes great sense, but Jesus likely meant for the phrase to carry more meaning than this.

A clue is in the word itself. Epi in Greek means “toward,” and ousios in Greek means “essence,” with the resulting meaning of “essential” or “true.” The idea seems to be this: when you eat bread, you just get hungry again, but there is an even more “essential” bread that we need to live. Jesus referred to “eating bread in the Kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15), a promise he brought into the present at his final Passover meal when he invited his disciples to eat the bread which pointed to his broken body on the cross. In John chapter six, he challenged people to participate in his own life by using the metaphor of eating his flesh. It is very likely that in this prayer Jesus is alluding to the same idea. I’ve used the word “true bread” as a stand-in for this strange phrase “essential bread,” for which we have no precise English equivalent.

#### **Don’t lead us into temptation...**

This brings us to the last lines of the prayer. A life truly aligned to God’s will is a life with the self-awareness that acknowledges failure and moral compromise. It’s a life that both asks for forgiveness and grants it to others when they fail us as well. Jesus’ followers are to be the forgiven people who have been changed by their encounter with God’s mercy through Jesus and who are compelled to extend that same mercy to others.

The concluding request is a petition that God keep us aligned with his purposes, even when it’s difficult. Jesus picks up on the very ancient Jewish concept of “the test.” The test refers to the idea that every human will encounter moments when their integrity and character will be put to the test, leading up to the “great test” that will come upon humanity before God’s brings history to its conclusion. Bible readers first encounter this test in the story about the mysterious and sinister evil that tests humanity in the

Garden of Eden. “The evil one” is represented as a snake in that story, but then in the following narrative about Cain and Abel, we’re told that “sin” is an animated force, crouching like a hungry animal waiting to devour Cain. Later in the biblical story, the Israelites fail the test in the wilderness, and so they’re bound to wander to death as a result.

Jesus saw himself as coming on Israel’s behalf to confront this evil and face this same test. Like his ancestors, he was tested in the wilderness by the same mysterious and sinister evil, and he overcame it. He continued to confront evil that oppressed other people when he healed their bodies and cast out demons. We may think that the main problems we face in life are other people or corrupt institutions, but in Jesus’ view of the world, the root underlying evil is the deeper, spiritual force that he defeated. In this prayer, we daily ask for God to deliver us from its influence.

## **The Prayerful Life**

Prayer is the practice of participating in the divine life. The Shema is a prayer that reminds us that this way of life is as simple as listening and loving.

The Lord’s Prayer is an intimate prayer, acknowledging the sacredness of God and anticipating the reign of God here in our daily reality. It is a prayer that aligns us with the way of Jesus, the way of forgiveness, of trust, and resistance to evil.

These prayers were designed to be memorized and recited daily. They’re an invitation to living life in a new key. They’re the gateway to cultivating a renewed mind and heart and a life that is more aware of the presence and love of God.

WORDS BY JON COLLINS

PHOTOS BY ANDREW PREBLE

# Pmurphy

BY MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

**PMurphy played a key role in developing the unique style for the Word Study universe, and he has illustrated and animated most of the videos from this series. He only sits a few desks away from me, so I thought I'd get to know him better.**

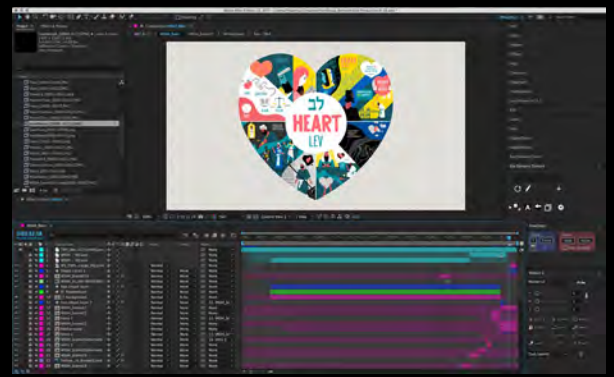
**MHH:** *How did you start drawing and animating?*

**PM:** I started drawing around seven years old. I remember sitting on my parents' couch, copying panels from my Batman comics or drawing Link from the Zelda 2 instruction manual. I also made my own comics, which were heavily inspired by Calvin and Hobbes, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Maxx and a few others. I began animating after I learned you could make two drawings on separate pieces of paper and flip them back and forth. As a kid, it was such an amazing feeling to see something you made come to life. I eventually went to college and studied illustration. It was only after school that I started to get serious about animation, and I started teaching myself how to do it professionally. That amazing feeling of seeing my work come to life remains to this day.

**MHH:** *When did you join the team at The Bible Project?*

**PM:** The Bible Project brought me on as a freelancer in early January 2017. I came in to help develop the style for the Shema Word Study series. They were looking for a style for this new series that would be fun, colorful, and could easily explain complex ideas.



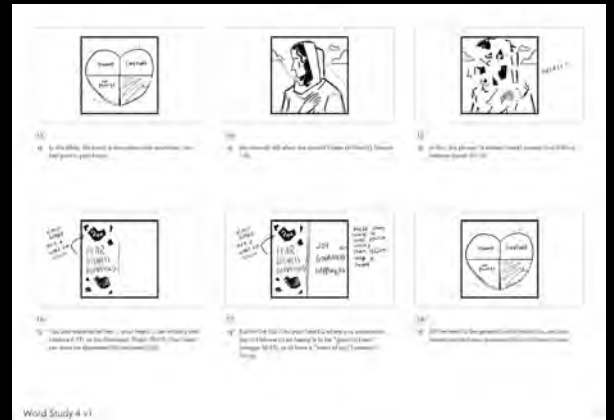


**MHH:** *The Word Study universe has a really fresh and vibrant style. What inspired you to go in that direction?*

**PM:** I studied art history in school, but I wanted to pull inspiration from the contemporary illustration and design I enjoy. I saw that the team already made use of a variety of styles, and I hoped to add to it. I wanted to create a style that was not quite as simple as a doodle (like in the Heaven & Earth video) but not as complex as a cinematic look (like the Gospel series). Additionally, I knew these videos would be turned into posters, so I thought the style could play more towards what you would see in printmaking—something flat, like a silkscreen print.

**MHH:** *What artists influenced you as you created the Word Study universe?*

**PM:** There were a handful of concepts and artists that inspired me. Originally, it started with Mike Perry, an illustrator who creates very fun and colorful animations. Then there is an illustration called "Africa is Awesome" by Jones & Co that really influenced the idea of creating a collage for the end of the videos and posters. Also Simon Landrein and Jonathan Djob Nkondo use a square-centered format in their videos, which I thought would be an amazing tool for our videos. I proposed keeping all the information in a centrally located square because it would be more



**AFTEREFFECTS WORKSPACE:**  
a screenshot of our animation software mid-project.

**WS04 STORYBOARD:**  
after the script is written, this is the first phase of illustration.

**WS03 COLORBOARD:**  
how we map out the colors for the scenes in the Word Study videos.

memorable. There is even a little bit of science behind it too. Our vision has a centrally located field where we take in the most information. I've always been inspired by Chicago-based comic artist Chris Ware. He composes his comic panels to be read like words, and they are beautifully simplified, leaving only the necessary information.

**MHH:** *What was your basic workflow from beginning to end with this series?*

**PM:** I receive the script from Jon and Tim, then we all have a read through it. We discuss what the end shape will be for the poster (Shema was the shape of an ear, Ahavah was a ring, etc.). After this, we pick the six colors for the palette, and then it's on to storyboarding and creating an animatic (a video showing the sequence of scenes with little to zero animation). Next it's on to illustrating each scene and making sure all the pieces are on separate layers in Photoshop, so they can be animated easily. Once that's all finished, I'll start animating scene-by-scene. We also have weekly reviews for our projects where I get feedback from the team. Then when all the visuals are locked in, Miriam, our production manager, sends the video to a sound designer to add sound effects.

**MHH:** *What was one of the most difficult scenes or characters for you?*

**PM:** In the Ahavah video, it was difficult for me to visualize what God's love should look like; it's such an abstract concept. Since the icon for the video was a ring, I thought a simple solution might be radiating bands of

color from the center of a ring. The different colored bands could represent the different kinds of love that we discuss in the video. My brain tends to think literally when creating imagery, so abstract concepts can be more of a challenge.

**MHH:** *As you were making these videos, you spent a lot of time with the Shema. Did you learn anything about this verse during the process?*

**PM:** It's interesting that the Shema was repeated every day as a part of the Jewish people's faith. It was a daily reminder of how they were to serve their God. I think that taking a little time out of your day to reflect is something from which everyone could benefit.

WORDS BY MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

TOP LEFT: BURNOUT

TOP RIGHT: JBDAY

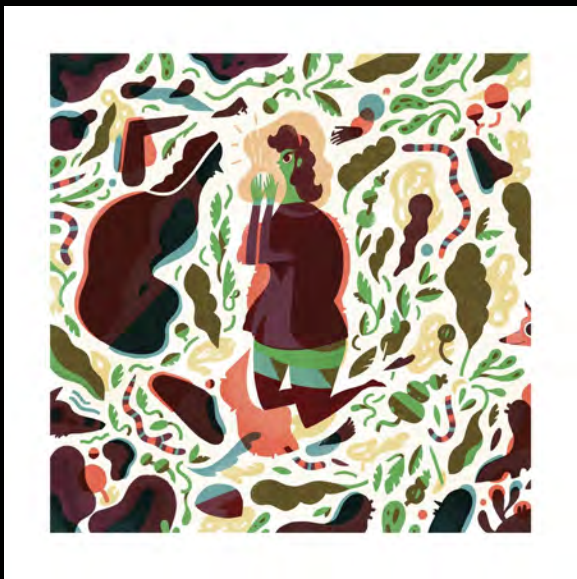
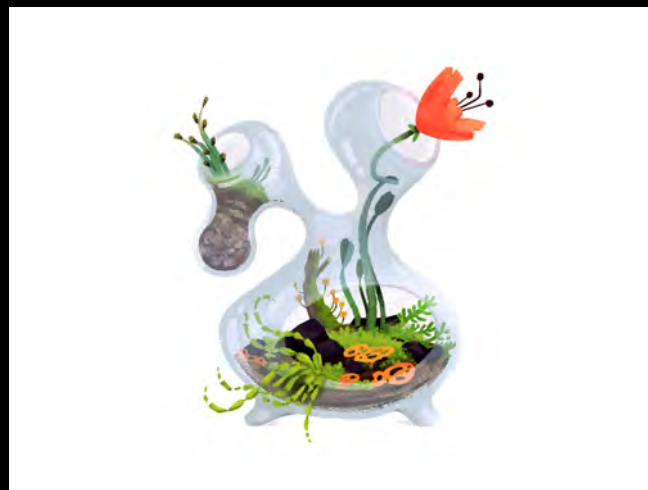
MIDDLE RIGHT: TERRARIUM 1

BOTTOM LEFT: DOGGIE DELUSION

BOTTOM RIGHT: SHAMAN 02









# Recommended Reading

**We asked Tim for some recommended reading on the Shema and other cool things related to it, so he ran to his bookshelf and picked three favorites.**

**SCOT MCKNIGHT**

## **The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others**

An excellent and very accessible exploration of Jesus' famous "great command" to love God and others, which he said was inspired by the Shema. McKnight shows the very Jewish roots of Jesus' teaching and also how Jesus claimed to be summarizing the entire Jewish tradition in his call to love.

**JOACHIM JEREMIAS**

## **The Prayers of Jesus**

This is a short introduction to the practice of prayer in ancient Judaism and how it helps us understand the way Jesus would have learned to pray as he grew up. Jeremias explores the language of Jewish prayer that was inspired by the Psalms, and then he shows how Jesus' own teachings and the Lord's Prayer are influenced by the Shema and the practices of daily prayer.

**JON D. LEVENSON**

## **The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism**

A profound study of the word "love" in the Old Testament by one of the towering Jewish scholars in the world today. This is an accessible and insightful exploration of what "love" meant to the biblical authors in the ancient world and what "love for God" practically entailed.

## Study Notes

Go deeper with our study notes. Each set of notes corresponds with one of our videos and gives the context for our scripts. Look up passages we reference, learn the Hebrew and Greek words the biblical authors used, and discuss the questions we're asking as we make our videos. All of our study notes are available for free online.\*

[\\*THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/OTHER-RESOURCES](http://THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/OTHER-RESOURCES)



00:00 - 00:32

### SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years every morning and evening, Jewish people have prayed these well-known words as a way of expressing their devotion to God. They're called the Shema.

Hear O Israel the **losho** is our God the **losho** is one, and as for you, you shall love the **losho** your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your strength.

We're going to look at the third keyword in this prayer: how Israel is called to love their God. But what does that mean? Love is a very common word in most languages as it is in ancient Hebrew. It's pronounced **ah-ha-va**. It most basically refers to the kind of affection or care that one person shows another. It sometimes describes physical affection like the King of Persia's love for Queen Esther, but there are other words that more specifically refer to physical desire or sex. **Anavah** is more broad.

1. This is found in Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. Our Shema prayer comes from Hebrews 1:1.
3. Most common are **losho** and **agab**.
4. Read more about it in Esther 2:17.

1. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

2. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

3. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

4. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

5. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

6. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

7. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

8. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

9. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

10. **losho** is love (losho) until the morning.

# Supporter Corner

**We get letters, phone calls, and emails from people around the world using our videos. Here are a few of our favorites.**

My name is Ignacio, and I'm from Costa Rica! I was emailing you guys to say THANK YOU for all your awesome work. Ever since I discovered TBP, reading the Bible has been a whole new experience. I've recently finished the Torah (which I thought I'd never do) and with the Read Scripture program, as well as the videos, the podcasts, the Q+R videos, and the blog, I've been able to enjoy it, and now I'm looking forward to the rest of the Bible.

I'm a Catholic, and without you guys, I wouldn't have been able to start reading the Bible and enjoying it as much as I do. The posters look awesome in my room, and they keep me entertained just by looking at them.

**IGNACIO, COSTA RICA**

Hi, my name is Asher. I am 11 years old. You have probably been getting lots of emails the past couple weeks from Ruth, which is my mom. Most of those messages were actually from me! I started watching your videos somewhere in January because our youth pastor showed me a couple of videos from you and asked me if we should start playing them in youth group. I just automatically started to love them, and now me and my mom watch them everyday for school (because I'm home schooled). Today I got the Genesis poster, and it's amazing! I can't wait for more incredible stuff!

**ASHER, MARYLAND**



**BIBLE PROJECT FANS IN ZAMBIA**

**Thank you all!**





## How to Get the Next Issue

We'll be putting out a new issue every quarter. Our winter edition comes out early 2018. New issues will be sent automatically to monthly supporters in the US and Canada who give \$10 or more per month. If you liked this issue and want to make sure you keep getting more, go to our website and sign up to become a monthly supporter if you haven't already done so.

[THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/DONATE](http://THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/DONATE)







# Have we been reading Bible stories all wrong?

Watch "Plot in Biblical Narrative" to find out.

[THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/EXPLORE/HOW-TO-READ-THE-BIBLE](https://www.thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible)